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POULTRY CLUB



FIRST YEAR

# Baby Chick Troubles and Their Control

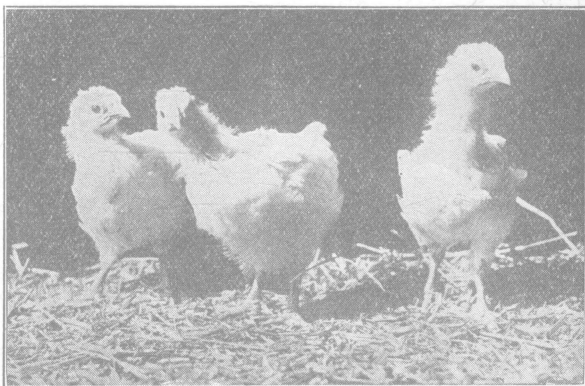
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## CROWDING

The use of the large colony brooder stoves has made it possible to brood several hundred chicks together in one colony house. One of the most serious problems in this method of brooding is to prevent the chicks from crowding or piling up in the corners of the brooder house or around the stove. There are some general rules which, if followed, will reduce the losses.

1. Have the brooder stove regulated before the chicks are placed in the brooder. Extremes of temperature, heat or cold, will cause the chicks to crowd. The right temperature for baby chicks is 100 degrees Fahrenheit under the hover. The house



Good care and proper feed help to keep the growing chicks healthy and vigorous

should be large enough to permit the chicks to move away from the heat, in this way they will regulate their temperature by staying in that part of the house most comfortable. If the fire gets low and the weather is cold the chicks are sure to crowd. If the stove gets so hot that the chicks hunt the corners for cool air they will often remain there after the room cools off and crowding will result.

2. Place a piece of  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch mesh chicken wire or  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch mesh hardware cloth, 1 to 2 feet high around the stove about 2 or 3 feet from the edge of the hover. This will prevent the chicks from getting away from the stove and will teach them the source of heat. It is not necessary to use this after 3 or 4 days. The circle can be enlarged during the daytime or after the chicks get a good start. It is advisable to round off the corners of the house with wire, boards, roofing paper, or by stuffing straw in them to remain thruout the brooding season.

3. During the late brooding season, after the continuous use of the stove is no longer necessary, there are many cold days and nights when the chicks will crowd to keep warm. On such occasions it is always advisable to start a fire. Remember that even tho the chicks may not die from such exposure they will cease eating, their digestion will be disturbed, and growth will stop. This lowering of vitality causes the little chicks to be susceptible to all the diseases known to baby chicks.

4. Teach the little fellows to roost young. One of the best poultry raisers in Ohio begins teaching the chicks to roost when they are 4 weeks old. The roosts should be made of 2- or 4-inch boards placed about 8 inches above the floor of the house. Hardware cloth or chicken netting should be nailed to the under side of the roosts to prevent the chicks from falling thru. A sloping runway can be made by placing 12-inch boards along the front edge of roost. The roosts should be constructed in such a way that the chicks cannot get under them. The entire roosting space need not extend more than 3 feet out from the back wall. It will be necessary to place the chicks on the roosts at the start. Later they can be driven on until they form the habit of roosting.

## DIARRHEA

The ordinary form of diarrhea is the most common ailment of baby chicks. The common form is often confused with bacillary white diarrhea, which is contagious.

The causes of diarrhea are:

1. The brooder stove may get too hot and the temperature in the house reach 110 or more degrees Fahrenheit even in the coolest corners. This weakens the chicks and throws them off feed, digestion is disturbed, and in a day or so a large number will be "pasted up." A high mortality usually results and all will have weakened vitality.

2. The same thing happens when the fire in the brooder stove goes out and the chicks become chilled. Careful attention to operating the stove or brooder is the only prevention.

3. Feeding the chicks too young causes diarrhea. The egg yolk enters the chick's body just a few hours before the chick hatches. The yolk contains enough food for the chick for at least 3 days. If the baby chick is fed before this yolk is absorbed the absorption will be halted, the yolk will remain in the body and decay or putrify, causing the entire digestive system to be poisoned, and diarrhea will result. The digestive juices have not begun to be secreted before the chick is 48 to 72 hours old and feeding before this time is bound to cause trouble.

Milk kept before the chicks at all times will generally prevent the trouble because chicks fed on milk have more strength and vitality to withstand ex-

posurè. Many experienced poultrymen go so far as to say that if sour milk is given as ~~the~~ only drink diarrhea can be entirely avoided. If milk is not available as a home product the condensed semi-solid buttermilk should be purchased. The experience of many prompts the statement that chicks cannot be properly and successfully raised in large numbers without milk to keep them in condition.

The only satisfactory treatment, after the chicks become affected, is to give the chicks water to drink in which has been dissolved epsom salts. One pound of salts to 3 gallons of water kept before them for 1 day makes a good dose. Give fresh water in the late afternoon of the day the treatment is given.

## CANNIBALISM

It is necessary to brood chicks in large numbers at a season of the year when they must be confined to the brooder house most of the time. Few poultry raisers are able to do this without having some trouble with the little chicks picking at each other, eating toes, tails, or wings.

There are two causes for chicks eating each other:

1. **Malnutrition:** When chicks are confined to the brooder house they do not get green grass, roots, bugs, and other food which nature supplies during the spring of the year. A continued deficiency of the essential and vital elements for growth causes the chicks to pick at every living object. A drop of blood starts and this satisfies the craving for animal food. The result is well known by every poultry raiser.

2. **Overcrowding** in the brooder will sometimes lead to cannibalism. The chicks may not get an even share of the feed given and consequently their hunger and craving for the element deficient in their ration causes them to start this dreadful habit. Once the habit is started it is very hard to control.

The remedies and prevention of cannibalism are:

1. Sour milk kept before the chicks from the very first will generally prevent this trouble. Milk contains the vitamins so essential to growing chicks, and since no bugs or worms are available early in the season milk also supplies the animal protein required in the chick ration. The water may be entirely eliminated if milk is available in sufficient quantities.

2. When it is impossible to get the chicks on range, or where there is not green range, as is the case during March and early April, the chicks must be given plenty of green feed such as sprouted oats and vegetables. Dandelions come up early and make a good green feed.

3. When this trouble is experienced hang up some pieces of fresh meat on strings high enough that the chicks will have to jump up to get it. This will tend to divert their attention from the other chicks.

4. Dig up chunks of green sod and place in the house. They will eat all fresh green leaves and tender roots and at the same time be kept busy.

5. Turn out doors on every occasion possible even tho it be for only an hour at a time.

6. Do not try to brood too many chicks in one flock. Where several hundred are to be raised, the addition of another stove and colony house is cheaper in the long run. Unless a great deal of time can be spent in the brooder house the average poultry raiser should not attempt to brood more than 300 under one stove and 200 is a much safer number.

## LEG WEAKNESS

Leg weakness, like cannibalism, is common in early hatched flocks that are kept confined for several weeks. A deficiency in the ration is believed to be one cause of this trouble. Confinement for several weeks in the colony house is a contributing cause. If the method of feeding and management as described in Club Bulletin "How to Raise the Chicks," is followed this trouble will not occur. Get the chicks on the ground on every possible occasion, and feed a liberal amount of milk, bone meal, and green feed.

## GAPES

A few poultrymen report losses from gapes. This trouble is caused by a parasite which attaches itself to the tracheal tube and death usually results from asphyxiation. This parasite passes part of its life's history in either ground worms or plants, and the sure preventive is to move the chicks to fresh ground where chicks have not been raised. The old chick yard should then be limed, plowed, and wheat or oats planted. It is also a good plan to keep chicks confined in the mornings until the dew is off. Birds that are forced to breathe slacked lime dust will cough up the worms.

## INTERNAL PARASITES

Internal parasites are particularly harmful to growing chicks and may be the cause of loss in grown birds. The parasites spread from one fowl to another thru ground worms, and the best treatment is to move the chick yard if possible. If this is not done the yards should be plowed and planted to some cultivated crop or forage crop.

**Symptoms.**—The affected birds are thin and emaciated, have a pale color in the face with a purple or bluish comb. The feathers may become ruffled and, especially in growing chicks, slow growth and development are obvious.

**Treatment.**—1. Move young chicks to fresh ground.

2. Put 2 pounds of tobacco dust in every 100 pounds of dry mash. Leave this in as long as any trouble is experienced. Half pound of epsom salts per 100 chicks should be given once each week.

## SORE EYES

Eye trouble in baby chicks is generally caused by chaff or dust getting in the eye. The only preventive is to keep the floor clean and use a clean litter. Mash containing salt may cause sore eyes. Occasionally chicks will contract a cold and the eyes swell and become watery, but this is not common. Swab the eyes with a 2% solution of boric acid.

## LICE

If chicks are affected with lice it is an indication of poor management. Hens should be treated before the eggs hatch by applying blue ointment to the skin below the vent. A clean, sanitary brooder is proof against lice. The only treatment for the chicks is to apply one drop of vaseline or grease to the top of the head and this often does more harm than good. Care should be taken not to apply too much. Dust the young chicks with a mixture of  $\frac{1}{2}$  talcum powder and  $\frac{1}{2}$  sodium fluoride.